The Sketch

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"NUMBER ONE," DOWNING STREET.

Our New Year portrait shows the RT. HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL *bent in characteristic attitude over his desk at No. 10, Downing Street. Hard at work as the photographer takes him, the Premier has just blown a ring of smoke from his cigar—and is as always the picture of determination.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY A. C. COOPER, A.R.P.S.

MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP.

New Year Hate. Good will and affability are in season, but they become hackneyed. I want to be original. Why not a little New Year Hate? The enemy has a plateful of it every morning for breakfast, so why shouldn't we have a spoonful or two just once a year? I will omit the too obvious hatees. I will not attempt to say what I think of That Wicked Man—I can safely leave that to others more distinguished and eloquent than myself. I won't even let fly at a demi-Führer who gets my goat even more violently than *the* Führer—I allude to one Pierre Laval; but I dare say I am prejudiced by having seen too many photographs of him; and, frankly, one is enough to be going on with. Herren Himmler and Streicher I will leave to such judgments as may await them in a place where, it is rumoured, even their own ingenuity in torments may be excelled. No, it is upon lesser persons and things than these that my commination is pronounced.

"I know Russia's our ally, but must you keep singing the Volga boatmen's song?"

DRAWN BY VICKY.

Sorry You've Been Troubled. I think I will begin with the telephone. Nothing has more firmly convinced me of the blessings of peace than the way this instrument has been behaving lately. One had come to regard it, when the dialling system was invented, as an almost infallible mechanical marvel. But now, deprived of the constant expert tutelage which it evidently needs, it develops an inexhaustible genius for impish tricks. Mine was completely mute for a week. That was not so bad—indeed, there are obvious advantages in a Trappist telephone. But when I get the gas-works every time I want the grocer; when I am rung up six times in rapid succession and asked if I am the crematorium; when the bell tinkles merrily and complete silence descends after the first "hullo" (especially when it is a trunk call); when the thing goes off in my ear with crackles, explosions and machine-gun fire—why, then I begin to wonder whether it would not have been better if Messrs. Edison and Bell had never been born. Mere grousing? On the contrary, I give a high place in my New Year hate-list to the bullies who lose their tempers with the instrument and roar at the patient, understaffed, overworked people who operate it. All I am saying is that a telephone, left to itself, is a very tiresome practical joker, and there are times when I hate it deeply. I know nothing which produces such a sense of exasperated powerlessness.

"What I sez is—you gotta take the rough with the ruddy rough!"

DRAWN BY LEE.

Shock Tactics. The queue-crasher rouses fierce passions in me. He is, I am happy to think, a rare specimen in this country, for we are a well-disciplined people in queue-drill—and assuredly we need to be. But every now and then the outlaw appears, with the tactics of the Rugby footballer or the steam-roller; and I was glad to see the other day that one bus-rusher was not only mulct in five pounds, but was officially designated "no gentleman." There are more subtle, insinuating crashers than this, and I am afraid that some of them are no ladies—the edgers-up, the musclers-in, the bumpers and borers, and those who are in such a hurry and have such important business that everybody else must yield to them. There is, I believe, a Russian decoration which entitles its holder (regardless of comradely equality) to go to the head of any queue. Conversely, I can see the crasher, in the Place of Punishments, condemned to be for ever the last vertebra in an interminable tail.

"Nothing much to do here on a Sunday afternoon, is there, Bill?"

DRAWN BY PITTS.

Pavement-Slugs. It may be because I do not love crowds, and am always anxious to get out of one as soon as I can, that I have strong feelings about swivel-necks. I apply this term to those persons whose heads are invariably swivelled in any direction except the one in which they are going. It is surprising how many of these contortionists there are. They appear to be quite oblivious of the orientation of themselves or others: they are totally rudderless. Many of them seem to be as weak on the cylinders as on the steering-gear. They lounge, crawl and saunter in the thickest of the throng, holding up

the entire stream of those who know where they are going, look where they are going and want to go there. I trust it is not merely peevish or impatient to feel that in these busy days there is no place for these pavement-snails. They are frequently accompanied by perambulators, but I suppose that, far from complaining of it, we ought to greet every perambulator with joy and gladness. I can testify that in the city where I live, at all the busiest times of the day, prams pullulate in a manner which would rejoice the heart of our statisticians and give pause to our population Jeremiahs.

Farmer: "*That land-girl from the circus 'ave fair turned old Eli's 'ead!*" (DRAWN BY WILSON FENNING.)

Ich Dien. The motto of a well-known organisation is "Service above Self." I inscribe prominently upon my New Year's black-list those who enter shops flaunting the banner "Self above Service." You know the type—I am I, and I insist on having all the deference and the conveniences to which I have always been accustomed. Again, a comparatively rare species nowadays, but it still exists, and war seems quite incapable of altering its mentality or of convincing it that, in abnormal conditions, the customer is not always right. Little wonder if this attitude sometimes evokes "impertinence." There is, I fear, not a little real and gratuitous "impertinence," due, no doubt, to fatigue, frayed nerves and much suffering of fools; but my observation is that it is more often provoked than not. I will try, with some effort, to think this of the handmaiden whom I addressed the other day (as I thought very politely, and even humbly), and who replied, with a baleful glance: "Wait till I 've blown my nose." It still rankles, but I put it down to my own lack of *allure*.

Cheating the Children. But enough of these animadversions! It would be an exaggeration to turn my New Year hate upon the potato: on the contrary, I admire it in some forms and tolerate it in others, and I am doubtless indebted to it for much necessary, if starchy, sustenance. But I do not feel, somehow, that it is a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. When I see that the Ministry of Food has been trying to make this thing of earth a subject of glamour and romance for innocent little children at Christmas, my sporting instincts are aroused. This, definitely, is not playing the game. Potato Pete's Christmas Fair! Inveigled and imposed upon by "enchanting caverns, hedged round with Christmas-trees," by magic wells, fairy gardens, and many other illusory delights, the singularly favoured children were at last admitted to the Seventh Heaven—and what do you think it was? Food flashes! Prizes consisting of vouchers for two pounds of potatoes for twopence! "Alas! unconscious of their doom The little victims play"—for, before they know what has happened to them, they have signed the pledge: "I promise as my Christmas gift to the sailors who have to bring our bread that I will do all I can to eat home-grown potatoes instead." Well, there is nothing like catching 'em young! Marvellous things have been done with the carrot—why not with the potato? Why not Christmas stockings full of potatoes? There is nothing propaganda cannot achieve.

"*Mind if I cut in now, old man?*" (DRAWN BY PAT AULD.)

Cabbages and Kings. The potato, however, is not the only star-performer in the vegetable kingdom. The cabbage is also in the limelight. And not only the cabbage, but many different scions of the cabbage family, including savoys, drum-heads, kales, broccoli, sprouts, cauliflowers, and a mysterious variety which I confess is a new one on me, known as "cabbage thinnings." The description applies aptly to certain clammy and indeterminate greenstuffs which are offered me from time to time on the paltry pretext that they are "good for me." Thinnings or fattenings, all cabbages, near-cabbages, pseudo-cabbages and quasi-cabbages are now to have fixed prices. This result has not been arrived at without intense official cerebration. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food has explained that gigantic problems have first to be solved, problems which might tax the resources of the Brains Trust itself. For example: how many leaves are there to be on a cauliflower? In short, when is a cabbage not a cabbage? "That is the sort of question," said Mr. Mabane gloomily, "that we have to

[Continued overleaf.

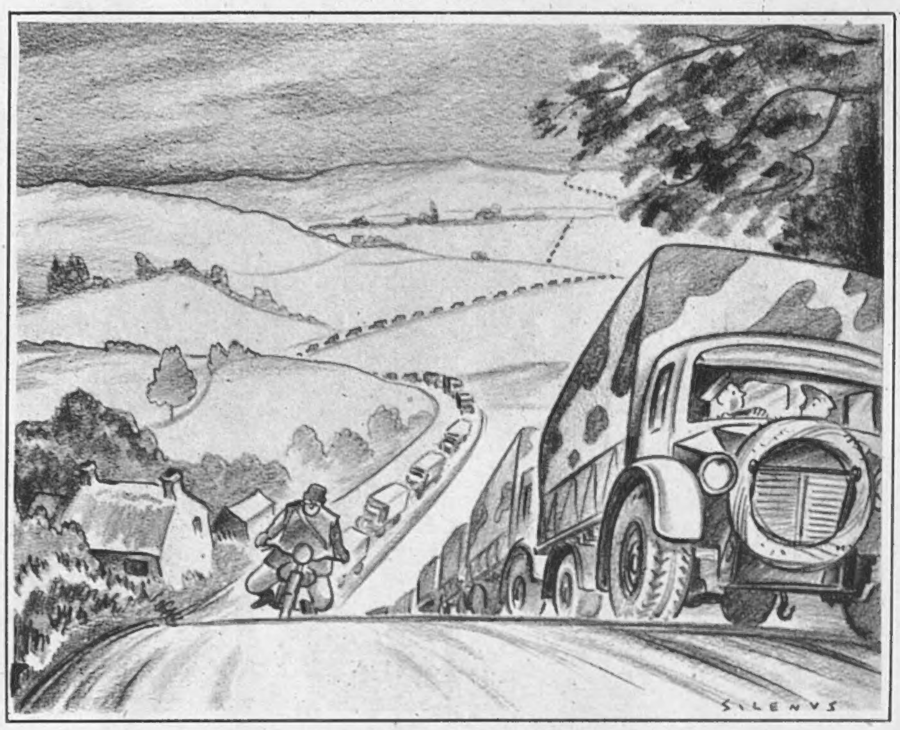
SALVAGE FLASH——PUT YOUR WASTE PAPER INTO BATTLEDRESS.

Continued.]

answer." Well, I can answer it in three words, *viz.*: when it is controlled. If you ask why a cabbage is not a cabbage when it is controlled, the answer is: because it does not exist. It will have gone the way of all fish.

Orders is Orders.

But what is the disappearance of a mere vegetable compared with the charm and the potency of a new Regulation? Daily these rulers of our uprisings and downsittings grow not only in number, but in fascinating complexity. I commend you, for instance, to the Order which deals with exemptions from firewatching duties. Originally, it was a modest Para. (*d*); in order to comprise classes of persons who had been overlooked—including the blind, deaf and dumb and expectant mothers, and even unexpectant ones on Saturday afternoons—it rapidly grew into Para. (*dddd*). This looks like a musical sign, but there is little harmony about it, and the emphasis on this particular letter of the alphabet may not be altogether inappropriate. Try to find your way through the Lighting (Restriction) Order. If you can, you are cleverer than his Majesty's judges, whose business it is to make sense of it. Commenting on this Order, with its 53 articles "and innumerable sub-paragraphs," the Lord Chief Justice recently expressed regret "that simpler regulations did not exist so that people might know, without necessarily having skilled legal advice, what their duties were." With the greatest respect, my Lord, not even "skilled legal advice," nor the fees for same, can rescue the citizen from his dilemma. No skill and no advice can make intelligible that which, of its nature, is unintelligible.



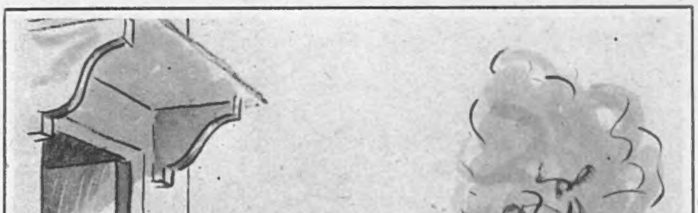
"Not much motor traffic on the roads now, Jim!"

DRAWN BY SILENUS.

The Sausage-Machine. And nothing, it seems, can arrest the spate of the Great Unintelligible. At this moment of writing, that mythical piece of furniture, the "table" of the House of Commons contains eighty new Defence Regulations and Orders to greet the New Year. They cover everything from laundry-charges to church benefices—for this sausage-machine turns out everything from a chipolata to a haggis. All that the individual legislator can do, if he thinks a particular Order grotesque or superfluous, is to "table a prayer"; or, as an Hon. Member once wittily observed, "we can only watch and pray." It is satisfactory to learn that certain Members have been watching with growing restiveness, and are now praying vigorously against some of these vexatious excrescences. Whether their prayers will be answered is a more doubtful question. Meanwhile, it is a little unkind of them to cramp the style of those ingenious officials who, as soon as the Orders are hatched, spawn the resultant forms and declarations. I am credibly told that, if the "operator" of a commercial vehicle wants to buy a retreaded tyre and pass it through a central inspection depôt for reconditioning, he has to fill up 24 forms in the process. A man who wants to sell his vegetables has to "take notice" of over 70 Regulations, and a dairy farmer, before he can sell his milk, has to fill in (each in triplicate) three double-sided foolscap forms containing from 14 to 18 columns.

Light Fingers.

Now, it is an odd thing—and yet not so odd when you consider the ordinary reactions of human nature, which is, of course, the last thing that bureaucracy ever does—that the more law there is in any community, the less it is respected. People give up trying to be law-abiding when the law itself makes this impossible, and all law falls into disrepute. I wonder whether this partly accounts for the growing disregard of the distinction between *meum* and *tuum*, which is a very perturbing element in our wartime society? In view of it, I was concerned to see a headline the other day: "1000 Women Wanted with Nimble Fingers." I fear that any shopkeeper could tell you that it would be quite easy to find them. I forget what their nimble, or thimble, fingers are wanted for; and, amid all the permutations and combinations of the wartime alphabet (which are threatening to beat even the New Deal), I also forget why they are to be called O.W.L.S.; but I view this new Regiment of Women with some apprehension.



"Dustwoman?" "Certainly not — salvage lady!"

DRAWN BY HAROLD BEARDS.

Raleigh Up-to-Date. It was not nimble fingers which were lacking in the glamour-girl mechanic whose well-turned ankles, protruding from under a lorry, attracted the attention of a passing Doughboy. What she lacked was cleaning rags, and, when she emerged, she said so, with what was doubtless an appealing plaintiveness. Instantly the Doughboy divested himself of his shirt, tore it into suitable lengths and handed them to the Damsel in Distress. Now, we all know what Raleigh did when Gloriana came to the puddle; but would he have torn his cloak to ribbons? The Middle Ages were all very well in their own pompous way, but for true chivalry give me Modern Times!

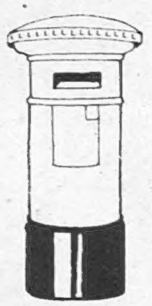
The fifty-fourth of our SERIES OF PLATES IN FULL COLOUR *published in this issue of "The Sketch" is by* DAVID WRIGHT.

"NOW, MISS, PER'APS YOU'RE SATISFIED I'VE GOT NOTHINK UNDER THE COUNTER!"

DRAWN BY FRANK REYNOLDS.

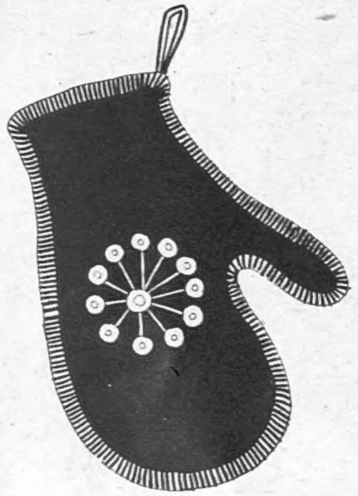
Please forward

By JOYCE DENNYS.



MY DEAR ROBERT—Charles and I spent a very quiet Christmas without the children. We gave each other a book about Nelson which we both wanted to read, but our most exciting present was a sort of felt glove for putting coal on the fire. Its underside is black, to match the coal, and the top a sprightly green decorated with little felt flowers.

Charles and I were delighted with it because, ever since our home life became darkened by the Fuel Target, it has been our frugal custom to put coal on the fire with our fingers. Each time Charles finishes this domestic duty, he rises to his feet, with his blackened fingers held stiffly before him, opens the door with his elbow, stumps upstairs to the bathroom, turns on the basin tap with his other elbow, and has a good wash. I, who have not been trained in such aseptic methods, and am not as clean as Charles, anyway, and often in more of a hurry, have other ways.



"A sort of felt glove for putting coal on the fire."

"Look, Charles," I said. "Black underneath, so as not to show the dirt."

"It's a *lovely* present," said Charles, slipping his hand inside.

"Now you won't have to open the door with your elbow any more."

"And you won't have to wipe your fingers on your knickers, Henrietta."

"They are black knickers, Charles."

"And I have *not* forgotten the occasion," went on Charles sternly, "when I happened to be standing near, and you wiped your fingers on the trousers of my dark-blue suit."

"Charles, this is Christmas Day!"

"Very well," said Charles. "We'll say no more about it."

It was Christmas afternoon. The fire, thanks to the Glove, was blazing merrily. Perry was asleep in his basket, the telephone was mercifully silent and Charles and I, who had lunched lightly off soup, cheese and celery, reminded each other with pleasure of our friends who, after turkey and plum-pudding, would by now be feeling stodged and flushed.

"That Glove," said Charles, after a long silence, "ought to hang on a nail."

It was the thought I had been keeping at bay for a long time. No housewife likes to be reminded of such things on a Christmas afternoon. Directly she hears the word "nail," her mind flies to the Tool-Box, and she remembers, with a twinge of conscience, that it needs tidying, and that all the nails are rattling around on the bottom, instead of lying neatly in the empty cigar-box marked "NAILS," which, for some reason, is full of picture-wire. From this unpleasant thought her mind leaps to the possibility that there are no nails. Did she not tell the Gardener last week that he could take all he wanted to mend the greenhouse door? No Gardener has ever been known to return a nail from whence it came, and the Housewife feels pretty sure that, if there are any nails left, they are on the shelf in the greenhouse with the bass, the seed catalogues and the secateurs. How terrible, on a cosy Christmas afternoon, to have to walk down the garden in the rain to look on the shelf in the greenhouse! Surely there must be *one* nail left, leading a carefree, rolling life at the bottom of the Tool-Box? Or perhaps a tin-tack? No, the tin-tacks were all used up on the black-out in the bathroom. But one nail . . . surely one small nail. . . .

"If you aren't going to read that book about Nelson, you might let me have it," said Charles, and I handed it over.

It would be so simple to get up from one's chair, go to the Tool-Box in the scullery, find a nail, take the hammer in hand and with three deft strokes assure for oneself a sense of smugness and well-being for many months to come.

But could one be absolutely sure of the hammer being in the Tool-Box? Was it not Matins who only yesterday took it for the linoleum in the hall? In which case, of course, it would now be in the kitchen drawer, or possibly on the dresser.

Charles laid down the book about Nelson. "If you will bring me the hammer and a nail I will do the job," he said generously.

"If you'll bring *me* the hammer and a nail I'll do the job myself," I said. "In the meantime, if you aren't reading that book about Nelson . . ."

No man likes to hear his wife talk that way, and Charles looked hurt.

"'You wiped your fingers on the trousers of my dark-blue suit.'"

"I am reading it," he said; "and, anyway, I don't know where the hammer and nails are kept."

At four o'clock Lady B. arrived to spend the rest of Christmas Day with us. The telephone woke up and rang for Charles, and I went to put the kettle on for tea, so we left her in front of the fire, looking at the Nelson book.

"'I've nailed it up for you.'"

When we got back, she said: "What a lovely Glove for the coal! I've nailed it up for you."

Charles and I stared at her and at the Glove, hanging so neatly beside the fireplace.

"Where did you find the hammer and the nails?" we said.

"In your Tool-Box, in the scullery, of course," said Lady B., opening her eyes very wide.

"You're wonderful!" I said, and I gave her a hug because she hadn't said that the Tool-Box wanted tidying, and most women would.

Charles produced a bottle of claret from the cellar, which I am beginning to think is like the widow's cruse, and, after our frugal meal, we sat and talked.

Lady B. says she can *just* bear wearing woollen stockings during the day, but in the evening they rise up and choke her, and she has to go upstairs and change into a pair of silk ones with ladders.

Always your affectionate Childhood's Friend,

HENRIETTA.

ENGAGEMENT OF THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN.

The engagement of the MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN *to* MISS ANTONELLA (TONI) NEWLAND *has just been announced. Lord Lothian succeeded his kinsman, the eleventh Marquess, British Ambassador to the United States of America, who died in 1940. He is the elder son of the late Captain Andrew William Kerr, R.N., grandson of the seventh Marquess, and of Mrs. Kerr, and was born in 1922. He also holds the titles of Earl of Ancram, Earl of Lothian, Viscount of Briene, Lord Newbottle, Baron Ker and Baron Jedburgh, and sits in the House of Lords as Baron Ker. Miss Newland is the daughter of Major-General Sir Foster Newland, K.C.M.G., C.B., and of Mrs. Carr, of Ditchingham Hall, Norfolk. She is a charming young girl, and speaks several languages fluently.*

PORTRAITS BY BERTRAM PARK AND PAUL TANQUERAY.

CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.

It is so pleasant to watch those excellent artists, Gaby Morlay, Michel Simon, Eric von Stroheim and the rest at work again, that few people will grumble if the new French film at Studio One, "DERRIÈRE LA FAÇADE," is not arranged quite as impeccably as their talents merit. "Derrière la Façade" was in production when the war broke out. It was actually showing in Paris when the Germans marched in. Under the circumstances, some trace of aberration in style is perhaps excusable. At another time, one feels, the individual incidents, so ironically conceived and shrewdly played, would have been better assembled, and a piece that now manages to be very good indeed might easily have become a great one.

The film is a *roman policier* in the "Grand Hotel" style. The scene is a block of apartment flats in Paris. The proprietress, Mme. Matthieu, is found murdered in the lift. The police inquiry, moving relentlessly from flat to flat, uncovers half-a-dozen secret tragedies and comedies in the lives of the various tenants. There is the earnest young student who goes to a night-club to buy off his father's mistress. There is the German gambler who wins at cards from a seedy Frenchman, with the connivance of the Frenchman's English mistress. There is the knife-thrower who loses his knife, and the eccentric—no thief, as he stoutly insists, but a properly certified kleptomaniac—who acquires it. There is the paralytic who does not know that his cherished pictures have long since been sold to pay the landlady. There is Monsieur le Président of Something or Somewhere, who so tactfully condones his little *amie's* evening with a gigolo. There is the well-meaning young man who "borrows" from the bank to pay the flat rent for a deserving girl. And there is the carefree young couple who simply improve the hours by kissing in dark entries.

Some of these sketches are more vivid than others, but all are done with tact and insight. To me, the affair of the President, the *amie* and the gigolo is the gem of the collection, but everyone will have his favourite. There is much to delight you in "Derrière la Façade," and much to remember. Probably the least important thing in the whole picture is the question—Who murdered Mme. Matthieu? This simple slaying is a mere bagatelle compared with the human dramas of the murdered woman's tenants, and even when you find out at last who did for her, it is hardly likely that you will care.

It isn't often that one sees an original film-story that seems to have in it the bones of a good novel, but I couldn't help thinking that "SQUADRON LEADER X" (Regal and London Pavilion) might be worked, if its author, or authors, were so minded, into a very pretty best-seller for the publishers. The original story is by Emeric Pressburger, who wrote "49th Parallel" and "One of Our Aircraft is Missing." Screen Play and Adaptation is by Wolfgang Wilhelm. I mention both these gentlemen, as I have long since learnt the unwisdom in the film world of singling out one individual for particular praise or condemnation. I should not care to decide who is responsible for the final effectiveness of "Squadron Leader X" as a picture, but certainly Messrs. Pressburger and Wilhelm, one or both of them, have helped more than somewhat with a story that is vivid in incident, crisp and original in plot.

Pressburger, as you may remember, is a specialist in escape stories. "49th Parallel" was about a Nazi submarine crew trying to escape from Canada. "One of Our Aircraft" was about a British bomber crew trying to escape from Occupied Holland. "Squadron Leader X" is about a *Luftwaffe* fighter pilot trying to escape from England.

The plot belongs to the clear-cut thriller type, but is so well worked out that the whole thing, if not exactly probable, seems plausible. Erich Kohler (Eric Portman) is a Nazi propaganda ace, employed by Dr. Goebbels in Occupied Belgium. He has, on paper, twenty-two victories to his credit. He likes to think of himself as "single-handed, all alone in the sky, eye to eye with death." He likes to think of himself all the time. He steps out of his Messerschmitt at the airfield like a young god. One acolyte holds the mirror while he combs his hair. Another acolyte hands him his white silk scarf. A third kneels down to photograph him, chin high, arm out at the salute.

Because Erich Kohler was brought up in England and speaks perfect English, he is chosen for a special mission. Dressed in R.A.F. uniform, he is to be dropped by parachute over Ghent. His job is to get it whispered round the city that the R.A.F. are bombing civilian targets. Unfortunately for the dashing airman, his impersonation of one Squadron Leader Stanley Huston, complete with packet of Players and photograph of wife and baby, is just too good. Before he can say "Gestapo" he is being smuggled out of the country by Belgian patriots. Along with three members of an R.A.F. bomber crew, he is taken by lorry to the coast, and shipped willy-nilly to England.

He slips away from his companions in the fog somewhere along the south-east coast, steals a Service cap and gas-mask, and makes for London. After that the hunt is up. Scotland Yard and M.I.5 get on the trail. Kohler, *alias* Squadron Leader Huston, *alias* Wainwright, *alias* Browning, tries to contact his pre-war friends. What has happened to Kreitner, of the delicatessen shop? Leander, of the Continental bakery? Closed up and gone. Wagner, of Tulse Hill? Interned in the Isle of Man. Schultz? Committed suicide. Barbara Lucas, of the Austro-German Hospital? Married to a doctor in the R.A.F. . . . But Barbara (Ann Dvorak) was in love with Kohler in the old days, and for her husband's sake she can still be blackmailed. With the girl's reluctant help, the fugitive finds shelter for the night, makes his way across country, steals a 'plane from an airfield and streaks off towards the Channel with a squadron of Spitfires on his tail. The ending packs a terrific punch, but whether its propaganda is as generally satisfying as its sense of poetic justice I am rather inclined to doubt. Probably the audience would prefer to see the R.A.F. finish Kohler off with a well-directed burst. As it is, he runs into a formation of Messerschmitts, is shot down by his own men, and crashes to his death, screaming.

THE BEST THEATRES.

Starred by "The Sketch." ******=highest value.***

**Adelphi: "THE DANCING YEARS." Ivor Novello in his romantic musical play, with Muriel Barron and Roma Beaumont.

***Aldwych: "WATCH ON THE RHINE." Diana Wynyard, Anton Walbrook, Athene Seyler, Valerie Taylor. Anti-Nazis in the U.S.A.

***Apollo: "FLARE PATH." R.A.F. "ops." Adrianne Allen.

**Cambridge: "THE BELLE OF NEW YORK." Revival, with Evelyn Laye.

**Comedy: "MURDER WITHOUT CRIME." Raymond Lovell, well supported.

***Duchess: "BLITHE SPIRIT." Noel Coward's play. Kay Hammond, Cecil Parker, Margaret Rutherford.

*Garrick: "AREN'T MEN BEASTS." Robertson Hare; Alfred Drayton in revival.

**Globe: "THE PETRIFIED FOREST." Owen Nares, Constance Cummings, Hartley Power in Robert Sherwood's entertaining play.

**Haymarket: "THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA." Vivien Leigh in a Shavian revival. Well cast.

**Hippodrome: "LET'S FACE IT." Bobby Howes, Pat Kirkwood, Joyce Barbour. Cole Porter music.

**Lyric: "WALTZ WITHOUT END." Unexpected version of Chopin's life and music.

**New: Sadler's Wells season of opera.

**Palace: "FULL SWING." Cicely Courtneidge and Jack Hulbert at their best.

**Palladium: "BEST BIB AND TUCKER." Tommy Trinder and Co. again.

***Phœnix: "DU BARRY WAS A LADY." Frances Day, Arthur Riscoe star in mad musical comedy with Cole Porter music.

*Playhouse: "THE HOUSE OF JEFFREYS." Russell Thorndike's thriller. Sybil Thorndike, Robert Adams, Gwendolyn Gray.

**Princes: "WILD ROSE." Jessie Matthews and Richard Hearne in lively musical comedy.

**St. Martins: "CLAUDIA." Pamela Brown and Hugh Sinclair on an American farm.

**Saville: "FINE AND DANDY." Good show, with Leslie Henson, Stan Holloway, Dorothy Dickson, Douglas Byng.

***Savoy: "THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER." Brilliant boorishness by Robert Morley.

**Strand: "ARSENIC AND OLD LACE." Witty murderous farce. Lilian Braithwaite, Mary Jerrold, Naunton Wayne, Frank Pettingell, Edmund Willard.

*Vaudeville: "MEN IN SHADOW." Sabotage in France. John Mills.

*Westminster: Season of Shakespeare, with Robert Atkins and first-rate cast.

*Wyndham's: "QUIET WEEK-END." Sequel to "Quiet Wedding."

PANTOMIMES.

Coliseum: "MOTHER GOOSE." Patricia Burke; George Gee; Norman Evans. *His Majesty's:* "JACK AND JILL." Arthur Askey; Florence Desmond; Eddie Gray. *Stoll:* "CINDERELLA." Nervo and Knox; Fay Compton; Naughton and Gold; Ted Ray. *Victoria Palace:* "BABES IN THE WOOD." Lupino Lane; Adele Dixon; Polly Ward. *Winter Garden:* "PETER PAN." Ann Todd; Alastair Sim.

N.B.—While we shall always do our best to keep this list up to date, we cannot hold ourselves responsible for any errors which may occur. Consult your daily paper; ring up the theatre, to avoid disappointment.

This last scene would be almost unbearable if Eric Portman had not created so deliberately the portrait of a complete cad. Most fugitives, even enemy fugitives, are apt to inspire a certain sporting sympathy in the audience when the whole pack is hot on their heels. But this fellow is immune from sympathy. Without heart or guts, he is detestable in every way. He cares for nobody but himself. He has not even the fanatical idealism of the submarine commander in "49th Parallel." Even his own countrymen sense that he would betray them to save his own skin. The Gestapo want him just as much as M.I.5. It is a tough part for any actor to play, and Mr. Portman has done it with courage and skill. His super-brute dominates a film in which all the parts are satisfactorily filled, with a specially heart-catching sketch of a Swiss cook from a Mr. Martin Miller.

"SEVEN DAYS' LEAVE" (New Gallery) has two American swing bands, three eccentric dancers, several "hot" singers, one specialist in imitations, a couple of radio features and Victor Mature, but it still manages to be pretty funny. Mr. Mature is an Army private, who learns from the radio that he is the missing heir to a 100,000-dollar estate. There is only one string tied to the fortune, and that is, he must marry a certain Miss Havelock-Allen before he inherits. Seven days' embarkation leave, he reckons, will just about give him time to carry out this programme. It seems to him very simple. (1) Marry Miss Allen. (2) Claim the money. (3) Divorce Miss Allen. Just like that. Of course, when he plans the schedule he doesn't know that Lucille Ball is going to turn out to be Miss Allen.

"The Vanishing Virginian"—M.-G.-M.'s latest (due Empire, January 15)—stars FRANK MORGAN *and* SPRING BYINGTON *as Robert Yancey and his wife. Loud of voice, with a strong sense of justice, adoring his Rosa, Yancey is the centrepiece of a fascinating story of family life.*

You may get a little tired of "Seven Days' Leave" towards the end, when the gloss has worn off, the producers are marking time with a garden-party in aid of the Allied War Relief, and there is nothing much left to happen except for Miss Allen to realise that her soldier can be naturally eager to secure the dough, and yet love her truly. Most of the film is amusing enough, though, in a vehemently entertaining way. There is at least one good number, quite a lot of bright gags and an excellent imitation of Ronald Colman. And it seemed to me—or am I dreaming?—that Victor Mature showed some trace of a talent not markedly distinguishable in most of his previous films.

R.K.O. Radio's "The Navy Comes Through" (due Odeon, Leicester Square, Jan. 8) stars PAT O'BRIEN *as Mike Mallory, and* GEORGE MURPHY *as Lieut. Tom Sands. Mallory's testimony is partly responsible for the court-martial and resignation of Sands from the U.S. Navy, and Sands is assigned to a freighter, only to find Mallory C.P.O. in charge.*

"FOR ME AND MY GAL" (Empire) belongs to a type of back-stage musical immensely popular in the early days of the talkies. We haven't seen so much of him lately, but there was a time when the Small Time vaudeville player who yearned to get into Big Time was a stock heroic figure. "For Me and My Gal," as the title will suggest to those with long memories, belongs to the period of the last war. The Germans are nearing Paris when the film begins, and Jo Hayden (Judy Garland), of the Jimmy Metcalfe song-and-dance act, is playing the mid-west circuit. Jo has a single burning ambition in life—to make the Palace, New York. So has Harry Palmer (Gene Kelly), the comic on the same bill. This naturally causes Jo to fall in love with Harry at first sight. At least, I have not been able to think of any other reason.

Jo loves Harry with one of those passions that transcend. It 's way down deep inside of her. "He 's right, and she loves him, he's wrong and she loves him, and she guesses it 's all no good." For Harry's sake she splits up the act with Jimmy Metcalfe (George Murphy)—which is silly, anyway, because, apart from being a thoroughly decent chap, Jimmy gets to the Palace in no time. Harry, after skirmishing around with a singing star (Marta Eggerth), who stands him too many *Cointreaus* in a Pullman, is all set for the Palace, when he gets drafted. Is this the end? Not on your life! He shuts a trunk down on his hand to avoid the draft. Jo shuns him. He joins the Y.M.C.A. in France and becomes a hero. Jo yearns for him. Finally, he makes the Palace (with medal and hand in bandages), gets Jo, the fade-out and the hit number. Your feeling for "Me and My Gal" will probably be conditioned by your reaction to the personality and talent of Mr. Gene Kelly. That, of course, is strictly something between you and you.

ERIC PORTMAN *plays Erich Kohler, flashy young Nazi pilot, in "Squadron Leader X" (Regal, Marble Arch; and London Pavilion). This exciting film is reviewed here.*

"LENIN IN OCTOBER" (Tatler) was shown before the war by the Film Society, but wears so well that I strongly recommend it. After a series of rather perfunctory, functional Soviet films, it is good to be reminded of the great tradition. "Lenin," which reconstructs on an ample scale the ten days that shook the world in 1918, has many virtues apart from the politico-sociological. It is powerfully made. It astounds one with its use of sound, its use of crowds, its clear appreciation of the screen as a blank rectangle to be filled with an imposing and progressive pattern of images. B. V. Shchukin's portrait of Lenin still knocks most of our Western character actors sideways.

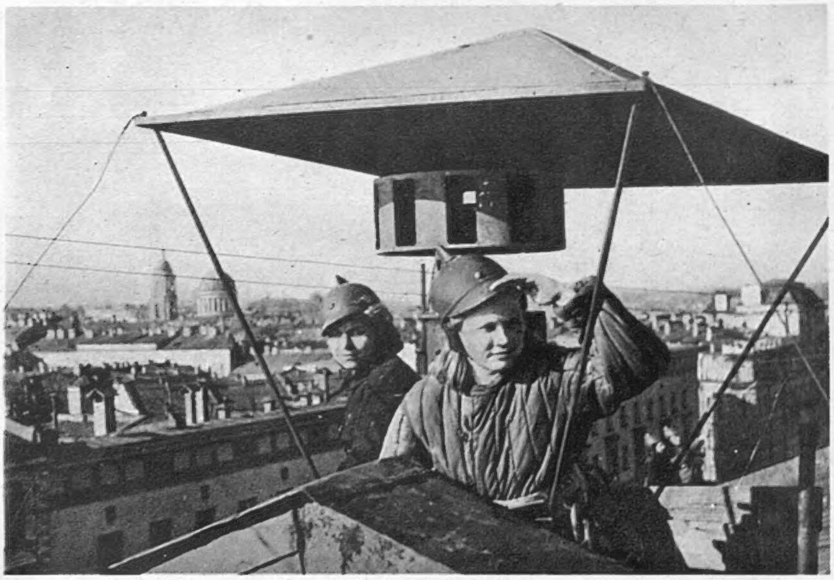
Myra (JANE WYATT), *a nurse, aboard the freighter after she has been torpedoed by a U-boat, meets her ex-fiancé. There is a thrilling battle between U-boats and the "Odin," captured by a ruse of Sands, who convinces Mallory that the findings of the court-martial were in error.*

Eats and drinks tasted twice as good to representatives of the Allied Nations at the "Store Door Canteen," New York, when SERVED BY FAMOUS BEAUTIES, THE CONOVER COVER GIRLS.

LADY CLARK, *wife of the Director of the National Gallery, opened an exh of "The War as Seen by Children" at the Cooling Galleries. She is Brenda from Alsace.*

MAJOR DAVID NIVEN, *Rifle Brigade, the film star, and* MRS. NIVEN, *formerly Miss Primula Rollo, are admiring their three-weeks-old baby.*

Right: PRINCE EMANUEL GALITZINE, R.A.F.V.R., *youngest son of Prince Vladimir Galitzine, is engaged to* MISS GWENDOLINE RHODES, *younger daughter of Captain Stanley Rhodes, of Donaghadee.*



THESE RUSSIAN WOMEN *are members of Leningrad's Fire Fighting Services and are seen on duty, keeping guard over their city from a high point of vantage. Note their warm clothing—for it is a chilly job.*

MRS. EVELYN STEEL, *only daughter of Sir Bernard Spilsbury, the p ogist, is countering the toy shortage by her own efforts. Here she is examples of her work—made from scraps for Camden Town childr*

THE CAMERA VIEWS ART, DUTY A

CAPTAIN RHYDIAN LLEWELLYN, M.C., *the Welsh Guards, youngest son of the late Sir David Llewellyn, married* LADY HONOR VAUGHAN, *second daughter of the Earl of Lisburne, at the Guards' Chapel.*

PINK DUMBOS DECORATE THE BAR *of the Fleet Air Arm mess at Malta, and are being admired by a pilot. They are the work of a member of the F.A.A.*

Left:
The DOWAGER LADY SWAYTHLING *presented the Buckle Gold Medal, three prizes, a certificate and the hospital badge to* NURSE L. WARD *at the first nurses' prize-giving at the Royal Waterloo Hospital.*

MISS CAROLE LANDIS, *American screen star, married* CAPTAIN THOMAS C. WALLACE, *formerly of the Eagle Squadron, now of the American Fighter Command, in London last week.*

The engagement of MISS HEATHER SCLATER, *younger daughter of Captain Frank Sclater, M.C., and of Mrs. Sclater, to the Hon. Edward Carson, son of the late Lord Carson, has been announced.*

ROMANCE ON THE ALLIED FRONTS.

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO—

WING COMMANDER HUGH I. EDWARDS, V.C., D.S.O., D.F.C., *for being the most decorated R.A.F. officer of the war.*

AUSTRALIAN-BORN WING COMMANDER HUGH I. EDWARDS has won the three highest medals held by an officer of the R.A.F. in this war—the V.C., D.F.C. and recently the D.S.O.

THE Q.A.I.M.N.S. SISTERS shown arrived in Benghazi after its reoccupation by British troops. They are seen talking to N.Z. engineers on repair work in the harbour.

LIEUT.-COLONEL V. B. TURNER, V.C., *for the superb bravery which won him his decoration and the title "Hero of Wishta Ridge."*

LIEUT.-COLONEL V. B. TURNER, V.C., Rifle Brigade, won the V.C. for gallantry at Wishta Ridge when he led his battalion in a night attack over 4000 yards of difficult country. Enemy gunfire isolated the position, and from early morning to evening the enemy attacked with nearly 100 tanks. Wherever fighting was hottest Colonel Turner was found, encouraging his men, directing the fire, handling ammunition, and acting as loader.

THESE Q.A.I.M.N.S. SISTERS, *for being the first to arrive in Benghazi, and hardly suggesting Florence Nightingale!*

GROUP CAPTAIN A. G. ("SAILOR") MALAN, R.A.F.—Fighter Command's top-scorer, with thirty-two German 'planes to his credit—recently assumed command of the Fighter Station in S.E. England from which he flew originally as Flight Lieutenant, Squadron Leader and Wing Commander. He was once in the Merchant Service, hence his nickname.

"SAILOR" MALAN, *for being Fighter Command's "top-scorer," and returning as Group Captain to the Station where he flew as Flight Lieutenant, Squadron Leader and Wing Commander.*

The GRAND DUKE JEAN OF LUXEMBURG *(seen with his father, Colonel Prince Felix of Luxemburg), for being at once hereditary Grand Duke and a British Army private.*

THE HEREDITARY GRAND DUKE JEAN OF LUXEMBURG, who recently arrived in England, has become a private in the Irish Guards. His father, Colonel Prince Felix of Luxemburg, was recently attached to the British Army Command, so both are now actively engaged in the struggle to free Europe, and Luxemburg, from Axis oppression.

AIR COMMODORE WHITNEY STRAIGHT, R.A.F., *for going straight back to work after escaping from a P.O.W. camp.*

AIR COMMODORE WHITNEY STRAIGHT, R.A.F., famous racing motorist, shot down in 1941 over France, was taken prisoner, escaped, and is back in the Middle East. —MRS. PRIESTWOOD escaped from a Jap concentration camp, and made a 1000-mile trek, Hong Kong to Chungking. —THIRD OFFICER CONINGHAM, W.R.N.S., a strong swimmer, on her way overseas, when the ship was torpedoed. In the sea she gave her lifebelt to a man who would otherwise have drowned.

MRS. GWENDOLINE PRIESTWOOD, *for her 1000-mile trek to freedom from the Japs at Hong Kong.*

THIRD OFFICER AUDREY S. CONINGHAM, W.R.N.S., *for risking her life to save a seaman and being mentioned in dispatches.*

MUSIC AT WINDSOR.

Music plays a most important part in the home life of the Royal Family. HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN *is an excellent pianist, and her daughters,* T.R.H. PRINCESS ELIZABETH *and* PRINCESS MARGARET, *have inherited her talent and are already good musicians. Our beautiful photographs, taken at Windsor during a short vacation, show the Queen listening to Princess Elizabeth at the piano, while Princess Margaret stands in the window in the background; and the King leaning over the instrument while Her Majesty plays and Princess Elizabeth admires her mother's technique.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STUDIO LISA.

Author and director of, and touring with these plays NOEL COWARD *is Frank Gibbons, the "little man" of "This Happy Breed," a family saga of the Gibbons of Sycamore Road, Clapham Common, during the between-wars years 1919-39. It is a bit like "Cavalcade," though on a smaller scale.*

In "Blithe Spirit," NOEL COWARD *as Chon first wife, Elvira* (JUDY CAMPBELL), *after a this enchanting wraith—the others, Kay Ha Le*

THREE COWARD PLAYS ON TOUR WITH THEIR AUTHOR.

NOEL COWARD started in Edinburgh on a thirty-six weeks' tour before coming to London with

[*Continued opposite.*

Left:
In "Present Laughter" JUDY CAMPBELL *plays the beautiful, predatory vamp, Joanna Lyppiatt, whose incursion into the lives of Garry Essendine, Liz Essendine, Henry Lyppiatt and Morris Dixon threatens to break up friendships.*

Phyllis Gibbons, of "This Happy Sycamore Road includes (back row, DONALD); *Sylvia, Frank Gibbons'* CASE); *Queenie, Frank's daughter* (J *Leadbitter* (DENNIS PRICE). *Front* THATCHER); *Phyllis Blake* (MEG TITH *(NOEL COWARD); Mrs. Flint,*

PHOTOGRAPH

N.B. A Coloured pl

... is called upon by the ghost of his ... Campbell is the fifth actress to play ... Corbett, Ursula Jeans, and Annabella.

MEG TITHERADGE is *Phyllis Blake of "This Happy Breed"—the girl who marries the Gibbons' only son Reg—and the young couple are tragically killed soon after in a motor smash. Meg Titheradge, who recalls a Gerald Brockhurst portrait, is a daughter of the late Dion Titheradge and niece of Madge Titheradge.*

...is married; the wedding group at ... Edie (BERYL MEASOR); *Billy* (JAMES ...CE CAREY); *Bob Mitchell* (GERALD ...GRAY); *Vi* (MOLLY JOHNSON); *Sam ...el* (JUDY CAMPBELL); *Reg* (BILLY ... *Frank Gibbons, father of the family ...mother-in-law* (GWEN FLOYD).

... BEATON.

Continued.]
these three plays—two of them new—the third, "Blithe Spirit." The fortunes of the Gibbons family of "This Happy Breed" are set against a background of the larger national events of 1919-39. It is in the Coward serious vein, but family parties and quarrels give lots of humour. "Present Laughter" is probably what the public regard as a typical Noel Coward play—the story of a fortnight in the life of the actor Garry Essendine, with wife, secretary, glamour girl, friends and valet. The plays are directed by Noel Coward and the décor is by G. E. Calthrop.

Right:
In "Present Laughter" NOEL COWARD *as Garry Essendine, a popular actor about to leave for South Africa, tidies up after a farewell cocktail-party. The play covers a fortnight in Garry's life, and we meet his calm secretary, his spiritualistic cook, mad Miss Erikson, and his valet, off-hand Fred.*

...serted in this issue.

PRINCESS OF KENT AND HER ELDER BROTHER.

PRINCESS ALEXANDRA OF KENT *is the only daughter of His late Royal Highness the Duke of Kent and of H.R.H. the Duchess of Kent, and was born on Christmas Day, 1936. Our delightful new portrait studies show her with her elder brother,* PRINCE EDWARD OF KENT, *who was born on October 9, 1935. They have a baby brother, Prince Michael, who will be a year old in July next. Princess Alexandra shows promise of inheriting her mother's beauty, and Prince Edward closely resembles his handsome and gallant father, the late Duke of Kent, who lost his life on active service on August 25 last year.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LENARE.

Wakened by a Nazi alarm clock, DONALD DUCK BEGINS HIS DAY *by heiling the Unholy Three—Musso, Hitler and Hirohito.*

The Duck gets a little of his own back: Donald's fingers take up THE WRONG POSITION FOR THE ENFORCED HEIL.

HURRIED OFF TO WORK IN A MUNITION FACTORY BY A GERMAN BAND: *Donald Duck's day of tribulations under the New Order.*

Breakfast under the Fuehrer: Donald dips his SINGLE HOARDED COFFEE BEAN *in boiling water.*

Ersatz delicacies as enjoyed in Central Europe: Donald Duck slakes his appetite on THE SMELL OF EGGS AND BACON.

URGED ON TO WORK AT THE POINT OF THE BAYONET: *Donald Duck kept busy in a Nazi shell-filling factory.*

KEEPING UP THE MORALE OF THE WORKER: *when a picture of Hitler comes along it must be saluted.*

WAR - WEARY DONALD UNDER NAZI RULE: *the pressure of work in a shell factory sends him mad.*

DONALD DUCK'S NAZI NIGHTMARE: "DER FUEHRER'S FACE."

"DER FUEHRER'S FACE," new Walt Disney production in Technicolor, distributed by RKO Radio, shows us Donald Duck's tribulations in Germany under the New Order. What with heiling the Unholy Three dictators every minute, getting wood bread to eat, and working non-stop in a shell-filling factory, with an *ersatz* holiday and not even *ersatz* coffee, the poor Duck goes crackers. But happily—for Donald—it was only a dream—and he wakes in the U.S.A.

Donald WAKES *and sees the hand of the Statue of Liberty.*

MURDER AS A GENTLE ART: "ARSENIC AND OLD LACE," WITH DAME LILIAN BRAITHWAITE

Surprising discovery in the aunts' house: Mortimer Brewster (NAUNTON WAYNE) *finds a corpse in the chest.*

Unwelcome visitor: Martha (MARY JERROLD), *Abby* (LILIAN BRAITHWAITE), *Elaine* (EILEEN BENNETT), *the crazy Jonathan* (EDMUND WILLARD) *and Dr. Einstein* (MARTIN MILLER).

Death by the "slow method" for Mortimer Brewster: Jonathan Brewster prepares to begin his horrible operation under the terrified gaze of Dr. Einstein.

The fatal glass of elderberry wine! Abby Brewster (LILIAN BRAITHWAITE) *pours the poison for Mr. Gibbs* (FRED BECK), *while Martha Brewster* (MARY JERROLD) *watches approvingly.*

"ARSENIC AND OLD LACE," which was produced in New York two years ago and is still going strong there and in seven other parts of the U.S.A., has just come to this country and is proving a big success at the Strand Theatre, with Lilian Braithwaite, who received her D.B.E. in the New Year's Honours, and Mary Jerrold in the leading rôles. The idea of the play is that the Brewster sisters are sane on every point but one—an important one. They believe that they are doing a praiseworthy action in putting lonely old gentlemen out of this world and into the next. They effect it with elderberry wine laced with arsenic, and when the play opens have buried twelve victims (with their proper religious rites) in the cellar. Their nephew Mortimer stumbles on the secret, and his horror surprises them; and the return to the house of their homicidal lunatic brother Jonathan adds further complications to the tale. The grim joke *is* really funny, and the perfect timing of the accomplished cast makes this fantastic skit on thrillers go with tremendous vim.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN VICKERS.

The poisoned cup offered with old-world courtesy and grace: Abby and Martha Brewster present a glass of their old-fashioned elderberry wine to Mr. Witherspoon (WILFRID CAITHNESS).

The old ladies of "Arsenic and Old Lace" at the Strand Theatre who commit murder with benevolent intent: DAME LILIAN BRAITHWAITE, D.B.E., and MARY JERROLD *as the Misses Abby and Martha Brewster.*

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

"DESTINATION CHUNGKING" is the autobiography of a Chinese lady, born in Honan and bred in Peking, who, in 1937, when barely twenty, came to London to study obstetrics. Her natural bent was for literature, but "Science was our god, a beneficent god to make of China a rich and happy nation." At that time she was a pacifist, and had many bitter arguments with her childhood friend Pao, now a cadet at Sandhurst. It was not his arguments, however, or his habitually "hsiung" (fierce) expression that converted her to nationalism; it was the Japanese invasion of China. Breaking off her English idyll, she returned to China to put her medical knowledge at her country's service. Friends were astonished that she should return at such a time, when she could have stayed away. Pao also came back. Arriving at Hankow on the eve of its fall, they were married, with Christian rites.

Henceforth, though there were many ecstatic reunions, their paths tended to be apart, and Suyin faced her first terrible air raids at Chungking alone. These are graphically described, and will stand high in "blitz" literature. Of the war in the air we see a good deal; of the war on land but little. There are interesting and impressive close-ups of General Chiang Kai-shek and his wife, the twin souls of Chinese resistance. The author has unbounded admiration for them, both for themselves and as typifying the spirit of modern China. Of Mme. Chiang Kai-shek she says: "She is not only modern; that is the lesser part. She is Chinese."

Two Ideals. Modernity and nationality mean a great deal to her. Throughout the book we are conscious of her devotion to these two ideals: her enthusiasm for science is part of her general veneration of modernity. They are ideals that, for a Chinese, are obviously difficult to reconcile. In fact, they frequently clash, and some form of compromise has to be found. It is this effort to find a compromise, to adopt an attitude of mind which can at once approve China, symbol of all that is ancient, conventional and conservative, and the spirit of modernity that would make China something other than it is, which gives "Destination Chungking" a special value. Arriving at Chengtu, the original home of her family, she finds masses of relations, many of them unknown to her, all living lives and possessed by modes of thought which to her Europeanised mind must have seemed positively mediæval. But, "nowhere else in the world are personal relationships so important and so binding. This may be right, it may be wrong—but it is there, a fact. Kinship and friendship are the double foundation-stone of the Chinese social structure—friendship through every kind of casual association, kinship spun out to the most remote degree." Loyalty to China curbs her national impatience with these venerable examplars of Chinese tradition, and makes her, we feel, a trustworthy observer with an objective outlook. "In Europe, conversation is made up of conflicting opinions; in China it is composed of similar opinions, endlessly repeated and expressed in well-chosen, hyperbolic phrases." One detects a note of criticism in this, but how restrained it is; after all, the Chinese who put politeness first may be right, and Europeans who like disputation may be wrong. With this author, tentative judgments do not imply a muddled mind; we learn from her a lot about China, and her opinions are as interesting as her experiences.

B.B.C. Brains Trust **PROFESSOR JOAD** *and colleagues had a quick-witted Wren with them on the air recently*—**WREN DESIRÉE GREEN.** *She has a good smooth mike voice and answered questions on the subject of equal pay for men and women with commendable intelligence.*

Mr. James Thurber's World. On the dust-cover of "My World—and Welcome to It" we see a sketch of a man, a woman and a dog staring skywards with expressions of bemused, indeed imbecile, expectancy, perhaps awaiting a bomb. Whether this is meant to be a symbolic, besetting vision of the world we live in, I do not know, but in a rather pessimistic meditation called "Footnote on the Future" Mr. Thurber wonders what will happen to the human race when we are able to use all our brain-cells, instead of a quarter of them, as seems to be the case now. The discovery of this untapped intellectual power, Mr. Thurber says, has filled the scientists with hope. "Just when I had been led to believe that the human being and his planet had no more hope of a prolonged and improved existence than a lace valentine in hell, word is brought to me by my pageboys that neither the sun nor the mind of man is going out." But Mr. Thurber is not reassured. Examining instances in history of the employment of hitherto unused brain-cells, he decides that in very few cases has the result been beneficial to humanity as a whole.

The only note of cheer I can strike, in conclusion, is to point out the possibility that . . . Man may never be able to use more than one-fourth of his brain-cells. In that case, he is not likely to become much more troublesome than he is now. He is certain, at any rate, not to become four times as troublesome. This is, I know, not much in the way of hope for the future, but it is, after all, something. At any rate, it is all I have to offer.

Animals and Men. Despondent as he may be about the future, Mr. Thurber has, as usual, a great deal of entertainment to offer to the present, and we are grateful for it. His delicious drawings are not a main feature of this miscellany; they only appear as tail-pieces. One shows a dog looking wistfully at a tombstone; another, the same tombstone without a dog. The animal world, innocent and contemplative; the human world, angry and quarrelsome—no doubt there is a moral in this. Mr. Thurber loves animals. "Courtship Through the Ages," a brilliant fantasy on information furnished by the "Encyclopædia Britannica," shows to what lengths of indignity the male of every species has to go in his efforts to awaken the favourable notice of the female. Another piece in the classical tradition of American humour, a rapid catalogue of absurdities mounting to a climax, is "There 's No Place Like Home." Never has that Aunt Sally of satirists, the foreign phrase-book, been subjected to such quick and accurate marksmanship. "The Macbeth Murder Mystery," which discusses the tragedy from the point of view of a detective-story writer, is also exceedingly funny; and "The Letters of James Thurber" a deliciously comic piece of self-depreciation. In short, there is something for every taste, except a low taste, and we extend a cordial welcome to Mr. Thurber's world, little though he appears to like it himself.

From Gay to Grave. One notices in Mrs. Thirkell's novels a distinct trend towards greater seriousness. Perhaps it is the sobering influence of the times. The change is not so much in the form as in the spirit. In her latest book, "Marling Hall," we still find characters (like Mrs. Smith) so exaggerated as to be almost farcical, while many others are seen from the angle of comedy: Mr. Marling, the Squire, can be relied on to speak with gloomy satisfaction of the time when he will be no more, and to call an unpopular guest by a name that doesn't belong to him. Any representative of the French nation (and there are quite a number in the story) is sure to be greedy, insensitive, conceited and censorious. Lucy, the younger daughter of the house, surprises even herself by her habit of repeating certain catch-phrases. "Marling Hall" is a very funny book—there is no doubt of that—with a humour that springs from many sources and feeds on literature (the fragment of metaphysical poetry is a gem).

But quite a number of characters are drawn in the round, and with special emphasis on some disappointment or problem or frustration; and a happy ending is by no means Mrs. Thirkell's obvious goal. She is careful with hearts, never irresponsibly pairing them off to make a neat pattern, or to indulge the sentimentalism of a wishful-thinking reader. Her conversations, bright and facetious as they often are, show nuances outside the range of the farcical, or even the comic, muse. Nothing much happens in "Marling Hall"; the war dominates the action without coming very near to it; the inmates of two large country houses exchange visits with each other, and with the rather intellectual town-bred brother and sister who have taken Mrs. Smith's ugly little villa; a few of the characters make each other signals and receive in most cases but half-hearted and unsatisfactory replies. Under an explicit and articulate surface, Mrs. Thirkell's mind is hesitant and tentative—an intriguing combination. What she lacks most conspicuously is narrative gift; her story straggles along at the same tempo, looking round for something to turn up. As something generally does turn up, this is not a serious drawback; but if she could vary her pace a little, distinguish more sharply between moods, and make the architecture of the story worthy of its material, we should enjoy it still more than we do.

Two Disappearances. In "The Daffodil Affair," the disappearance of a girl of unstable mentality is linked with the disappearance of a Harrogate cab-horse, and the detective who specialises in cases to do with the abduction of feeble-minded girls joins forces with John Appleby, to whom have been entrusted the enquiries after the missing horse. The chase is a long one, and takes us into tropical country. Mr. Michael Innes, always interested in the abnormalities of the human mind, has let himself go in an orgy of the occult; but he does not neglect the proper business of his story, and the denouement is both striking and melodramatic.

BOOKS REVIEWED.

Destination Chungking. By Han Suyin. (*Cape; 12s. 6d.*)
My World—and Welcome to It. By James Thurber. (*Hamish Hamilton; 7s. 6d.*)
Marling Hall. By Angela Thirkell. (*Hamish Hamilton; 8s. 6d.*)
The Daffodil Affair. By Michael Innes. (*Gollancz; 8s. 6d.*)

THE PLEASURES OF A BASEMENT FLAT!

ROSALIND RUSSELL and JANET BLAIR, the amazing girls from Ohio, have stepped from the stage to the screen to star in Columbia's "MY SISTER EILEEN," which was due at the Gaumont, Haymarket, and the Marble Arch Pavilion on January 10. It's an uproarious affair dealing with the adventures of Ruth and Eileen Sherwood, who come to New York to make their fortunes, and take a peculiar flat from an eccentric artist. The flat looks straight on to the pavement, and there are neither curtains, nor doors which lock, while the blasting of a tunnel underneath hots things up further. Men of every description come and go, but the girls steer through all the rocks, and finally land good jobs for themselves and get their romances straight.

When the Sherwood sisters (ROSALIND RUSSELL and JANET BLAIR) take a basement flat they don't realise that the windows are uncurtained!

Ruth and Eileen Sherwood find that there's not much privacy in their cheap Greenwich Village flat—here's an unwanted visitor looking in.

The cop on the beat, Officer Lonigan (DONALD MACBRIDE) views the sisters Sherwood with a certain amount of suspicion. Eileen is the devastating blonde.

It's tricky work even changing one's stockings in a flat without doors which lock, and with an uncurtained window giving on to the street!

Another delightful feature of the flat is that a tunnel is being blasted beneath, and at intervals the Sherwoods endure a kind of miniature earthquake shock!

THE GUNNERS' "CHRISTMAS FARE."

"A (N)ICE OPENING" *by the* A.T.S. *and* GUNNERS' CHORUS *is the first number in "Gunflashes'" end of the year revue.*

The A.T.S. *and* GUNNERS' CHORUS *have a professional look in their item "Dance Fantasy."*

"*The South American Way*" *has* PRIVATE YVONNE GLOVER, A.T.S., *for dancer, with the Boys' Band accompanying.*

CAPTAIN ALMEYDA *plays "Orange Blossom," one of the original sketches in this original revue.*

"*Rippling Ivories*"*—a two-piano interlude played by* LANCE-BOMBARDIER JOE BLAKE *and* GUNNER KEN GUTTERIDGE.

"*Our Services To You*" *was the dancing finale, with* GUNNER ERIC STRACHAN *(of "London Rhapsody" fame) with his* A.T.S. CHORUS.

THE R.A. Depôt Concert Party, "GUNFLASHES"—the well-known mixed team of talent from the Royal Artillery and the A.T.S.—gave "Christmas Fare" for their 1942 revue, at their depôt, later touring in aid of the Prisoners of War Fund. They had excellent backing musically from the R.A. Revue Orchestra under the leadership of Lance-Bombardier H. E. Walker, R.A., and were lucky in their dance producer, Gunner Strachan, an expert. The revue was produced by Sergeant R. Hicks, and organised by Captain H. Winn, R.A., and the orchestrations were by Gunner Siddons and Lance-Bombardier Blake.

INTERNATIONAL INTRIGUE, CRIME AND ROMANCE OF "CASABLANCA."

In French Morocco, 1941 : Ugarte (PETER LORRE) *is arrested on a charge of murdering two German couriers and shot when trying to escape. Rick, the gaming-house proprietor, makes no effort to save him.*

Renault (CLAUDE RAINS), *and Major Strasser* (CONRAD VEIDT) *make it clear to Laszlo* (PAUL HENREID) *and Ilsa* (INGRID BERGMAN) *that they will not be allowed to leave for Lisbon.*

Bribery and black market : Ferrari (SYDNEY GREENSTREET) *makes a fantastically high offer for the passports which Ugarte entrusted to Rick* (HUMPHREY BOGART).

Ilsa (INGRID BERGMAN) *comes to see Rick after his café has closed, in order to explain to him why she deserted him in Paris, but he feels bitter and will not listen.*

Rick, determined to secure the release of Laszlo, the husband of Ilsa, goes to visit his old "friend," Captain Louis Renault, Prefect of Police.

"CASABLANCA," due to open at the Warner Theatre and the Regal, Marble Arch, on January 15, is a modern international spy thriller set in French Morocco in 1941. Major Strasser, of the Third Reich; Rick, American gaming-house keeper, and Renault, cynical hedonist and Prefect of Police, are among the chief characters. Laszlo, head of the underground anti-Nazi movement in Europe, and his wife, Ilsa, are trying to escape to Lisbon, and the chief thrills of the tale concern their getaway, which is engineered by Rick, in spite of the fact that Ilsa was his girl before she left him for Laszlo.

"Round up the usual suspects" : Renault gives his orders to the gendarmes as they pick up the dead body of Strasser, and Rick realises that he is not to be charged with the murder.

A PRESENT FOR MARIE.*

By L. LUARD AND G. CAWTHORNE.

"TARGET for to-night is Nantes," the Intelligence Officer announced.

For a moment Pilot Officer Tremayne forgot his surroundings. In the darkened hut, the map of the target area, of the central island of Nantes surrounded by the river, by wharves and jetties, by the patterned railway lines and marshalling-yards of a modern commercial port, turned to a small château, deep in the peace and quiet of the Breton countryside.

He remembered every detail: the cedar-tree, two hundred years old, shading the cool depths of the well; the vines, peaches and apricots tangling the walls; the iron-studded door leading from the house—the door through which he and Marie had so often passed.

He wrenched his mind into action as a large-scale plan of the target moved on the screen, forcing it to concentrate on the issues of the moment. Then, as briefing ended, and the crews left the hut, he saw his Squadron Leader approaching. They had flown together for months. Each knew and respected the other.

"Easy meat to-night," Dickson said. "We cross the coast before dusk and make the docks last light. No doubling on our tracks. We 'll come straight out across Brittany. Attack at nought feet. The Bretons will welcome it."

"Yes; I suppose it 's got to be done."

The other glanced at his friend. "What 's wrong? Are the Gremlins getting you?"

John's face twisted. "I knew it would happen one day," he muttered. "She lives a few miles away. We were to have been married in August '39; but I was recalled. Three years ago—three centuries it seems. I 've had no news for a year."

Dickson turned away. There was little time for thought. He put his hand on John's shoulder. "You never told me. But it 's our job to help French patriots. Where 's the place?"

Dickson noted that the other's hands were perfectly steady as he unfolded the map. "Yes; right on our track. The C.O. must have had a hunch about you, John. What 's her name?"

"Marie."

"Well, if I know anything about it, you 'll see her to-night. Anyway, we 'll rattle her windows."

John relaxed. His eyes twinkled again. "Thanks, Bob. You can trust my navigation to-night."

The Beauforts taxied from dispersal to the runway, taking off one after the other—six in all—circling the aerodrome, then heading south in formation. John, in the nose of the machine, set course for the first landfall. As always, he experienced a feeling of complete detachment. His life for the next few hours would be bounded by the curved perspex of the aircraft's nose, the arch of the sky, the pattern of the land, its green and brown motifs changing suddenly into the open expanse of the sea. Low in the west, the setting sun threw a luminous pathway that glittered like scattered silver; and the continuous roar of the Taurus engines, dominated by a deep, rhythmic throb, became a symbol of life.

He checked drift, glancing at the wind lanes and taking their compass-bearing. The Met. report was accurate, wind velocity and direction coinciding with the forecast. Then, calculating estimated time of arrival, he spoke through the inter-com. "Hallo, No. 1; No. 2 calling. . . . E.T.A. landfall 19.00 hours. What height?"

"Hallo, No. 2; No. 1 speaking. . . . 100 feet and lower. Let me know when we sight your château."

John let his thoughts fly forward. He would recognise the château at a glance, even though he had never seen it from the air. To port, the thin white finger of a lighthouse tower appeared. They were dead on their course. Far on the bow he saw the sea merge into the loom of the land. France.

Dickson spoke again. "Hallo, No. 3; No. 1 speaking. . . . Keep a good look-out for Huns. Have your eyes skinned down-moon."

And from the rear-gunner came the reply: "Hallo, No. 1; No. 3 speaking. . . . Am keeping a good look-out. Sky empty."

The land swept towards them. As though making a practice run, Dickson climbed down to 150 feet, then pushed the nose of the machine down, until the belly seemed to be grazing the sea. A running-ribbon of white limned on the deeper shadows appeared—the sand-dunes of the coast, their exact landfall—and the machine steadied. Then, at the last moment, she soared, the aircraft astern conforming. The land flung back the roar of the engines in welcome.

Evening twilight began to merge with the pale radiance of the rising moon. They swept over another village, and John heard his pilot's voice. "Hallo, No. 2—I bet we 're rattling the windows now. How much daylight between us and the chimney-pots?"

"All of three feet, Sir!" the rear-gunner interrupted.

"Good-ph! I 'll fly lower next time. Tuck your toes up."

John laughed. Nervous excitement gripped him—the swift approach to the target surrounded by unknown hazards and, to-night, Marie. Suddenly he stiffened. A yellow gleam appeared ahead. Immediately his thoughts focussed. "Hallo, No. 1. See that light ahead?"

Dickson's voice came back. "Yes; and there 's another, and another. . . . The place is teeming with lights."

John remembered the other's words. "You were right about the Bretons, Bob. These lights are there to guide us."

"Looks like Blackpool," the rear-gunner caught up.

John searched ahead. He was trying to interpret the lie of the land. For a moment he feared they were off their course and would miss the château. Then the dark bulk of a wood leapt into his line of vision. He recognised it instantly. The château stood five miles away; and he was two minutes from Marie.

"Château two miles ahead, No. 1."

Bob grinned and nodded. "Make the most of it, boy! . . . I 'll bet she 's there."

Suddenly silver glittered on the darker shadows. He saw a nebulous blur that grew sharper with every beat of the engine. "Château dead ahead!"

Conflicting thoughts flashed through his mind. The Beaufort sank lower until it seemed to touch the fields. Surely the windows must be rattling now; but they were still shrouded in darkness. What had happened to Marie in all these months? In a few seconds she would be lost to him. He could already distinguish the courtyard, with its cedar-tree.

His heart leapt. A ripple of light touched the paving. It spread into a broad, diffused lane. The Beaufort lifted to clear the turrets, and he seemed to hear himself muttering: "Hurry, my darling—hurry."

Suddenly she was there. He saw her waving. The yellow light from the doorway touched her hair. He imagined he could even see her uplifted face and laughing smile. The rear-gunner's voice cut across John's thoughts, urgent and incisive. The inter-com. crackled: "109 astern—diving fast, dead up-moon."

Tracer cannon-shells ripped past the cockpit as Bob pushed the Beaufort right down to the ground. "Hold it till you can't miss," he called, and heard the rear-gunner reply, "I 'll wait till I see his buttons twinkle."

He heard a staccato chatter, and knew the rear-gunner had opened fire. A second later came his voice, calm as though at target practice: "Scoring hits, No. 1. Bandit passing to starboard."

John had his eyes lined on the sights of the Browning. He swung the butt to port, waiting. As the Messerschmitt flashed into his ring, he gave full deflection and pressed the trigger. He saw his tracer curving into the fuselage.

The Beaufort banked vertically, turning inside the other. Bob was grateful for the heavy load which slowed them down. As they swept round, John caught sight of the château centred in a silver pool. He saw a gleam of yellow. She was still there; she was watching; if only she knew. . . . Confidence inspired him. If they crashed—well, he was with Marie.

The machine swerved fiercely, then righted. He heard Bob swearing, an omen of life. Before he had time to speak, the rear-gunner called again, and his guns began to spit. "Bandit coming up astern, passing as before," he announced; and John knew the climax had been reached. They had been lucky once—and to-day luck would hold for ever.

He waited, his muscles tautened; his mind became cold and calculating. The Messerschmitt banked vertically on the starboard bow, with the intention of sweeping round for another stern attack. John knew this was his moment—his main chance—and he held the enemy steadily in his sights, watching the curve of his tracer.

The bullets poured into the enemy's fuselage. Then a red glow suddenly spread, bursting into a sheet of flame. The Messerschmitt, trailing a lane of fire, fell from the sky.

"Got him—wizard!" Bob shouted; but John, watching the flaming mass, fascinated, saw it hit the ground—and explode, the fire spreading in a blazing circle.

Then he looked round and saw the shadowy loom of turrets and battlements, reflected against the night, and his heart leapt. The wreckage was burning in the grounds—like a funeral pyre—and the door leading to the courtyard was still open. She had seen it all. One day she would know. Until then he must treasure this moment, this gift flung her from the sky.

He felt something warm trickle on his hand, and licked it, grinning as he tasted the salty flavour. It was blood—an honourable scar, he thought, received in combat for his lady. . . .

"Now for Nantes," Bob said.

They found their target. The same moonlight exposed every detail of the central island, surrounded and honeycombed by dock and railways. John knew his bombs had fallen true. . . .

Two hours later they walked into the Operations Room. "Any luck?" the Intelligence Officer asked.

"Yes—direct hits, the gunner saw the bursts," Bob replied.

"Good show. Anything else?"

"You bet. But that was John's show."

"Well, what was it? Group will want to know," the Intelligence Officer pursued with a touch of impatience.

John came out of his trance. "What was it? A Jerry 109. . . . Oh, yes, we fixed him—he was a present to Marie."

THE END.

**All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.*

the glory on their wings

Night raids . . .
Daylight raids . . .
Intruder raids . . . into
the dawn—across the
bars of sunset,
through rain and storm.
BUT . . . whatever the
weather—
cloudy or clear
there is always . . .
always a glory
on their wings—
for they go to avenge
the innocent,
to break the tyrant,
to release a continent
from slavery . . .
to save mankind.
No enterprise more
glorious in the
story of the world.
Once they were few,
now they are many—
they must be more—
more—and still more,
until only *they* darken
the new dawn . . .
and their tenuous
shadows are the
only darkness
on the fields . . .
and tents . . .
and towns of Europe.
MORE . . .
still MORE.

* * * *

Until this glorious consummation is achieved, we on the civilian front cannot pause or relax. However hard we work, however much we deny ourselves, however much we save from our earnings, our best must be counted short of our needs until Victory is in our grasp. . . . Are you sure that you are saving ENOUGH ?

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WOMEN IN WARTIME

IT is splendid news that Peter Robinson, Oxford Street, have been fortunate enough to secure a consignment of tweeds which they have made up into suits, one of which is illustrated above. There are many variations on this theme, including Harris, Cumberland, Orkney, Munro, Scotch and Galadale tweeds; the last-mentioned has a very interesting history. It was introduced in the days when the income tax was reckoned only in pence. In the early days it was worn by Game Wardens and Gillies. Passing through this stage, it was later woven so that it was looked on with favour by women in general.

THE hat above is from Lillywhite, and is reinforced with a brim which casts becoming shadows across the face, the crown being gartered with ribbon. Many of the hats are in pastel shades as well as in colours. They set well down on the head.

WOMEN have always regarded furs with approval and are ever on the look-out for those that wear well and are, at the same time, distinctive. Molho, 5, Duke Street, Manchester Square, is making a feature of the same. The extremely practical wraplet of blue fox seen above is so cut that it may be worn in many ways, all positions affording protection where necessary. Then there are long coats in serviceable pelts, at pleasant prices. Emphasis must be laid on the fact that they renovate furs; this is a way in which "Coupons" may be saved—a great advantage. By the way, Molho recently opened a salon for hats which has proved a great success.

THERE are no more becoming hats than those of felt, of which Lillywhite, Piccadilly, are making a feature. The one above has a high crown which is arranged with an almost draped effect with ribbon threaded through it, and it can easily be held in position with narrow elastic.

TWEED TAILORED SUITS

BECOMING FUR WRAPS

SIMPLE FELT HATS

G.E.C.

and

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Lord Hirst, of Witton, Chairman and Managing Director in his Chairman's Speech at the G.E.C. Annual General Meeting, July, 1942

◆

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Announcement of The General Electric Co., Ltd., Magnet House, Kingsway, W.C.2

GOR-RAY

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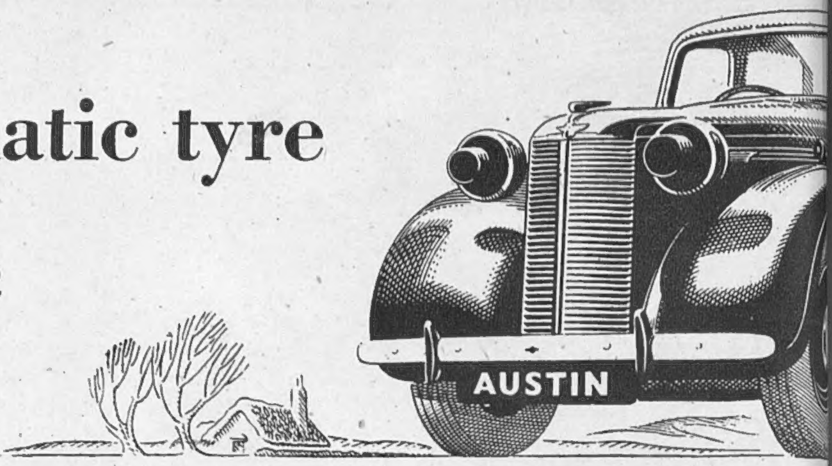

A tyre is not really pneumatic unless the load is bein carried by the air inside it. Any underinflated tyre carrie part of the load on its casing. This causes overflexing The heat generated results in separation and rupture of th fabric. Rapid, uneven wear of the tread ensues. Don't spoi the value of your Austin's wartime job by letting it wast precious rubber. Always keep tyres at correct pressure

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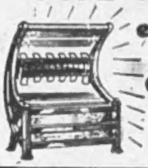

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